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War of the Rebellion

OPENING OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

By JOHN McELROY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

INVESTING VICKSBURG.

Pemberton Tries to Stop the Rout of His Beaten Army—Vain Attempt to Stay the Pursuit at the Crossing of the Big Black—Gen. Lawler's Magnificent Charge—Demoralized Flight of the Confederates—Pemberton Falls Back to Vicksburg—Grant Restores Communication With the Mississippi River.

The battle of Champion's Hill was much the most severe defeat the Confederates had sustained in a field action since the beginning of the war. While the casualties were not go great as in the battles on the Peninsula, at Antietam and Stone River, the defeated army was left in a far more shattered condition. The Confederates had never been struck so quick and hard as Grant had hit them, and though the brunt of the battle had been borne by Hovey's and Logan's Divisions, yet these had gone at the enemy with an aggressiveness that seemed like ferocity, and had torn the enemy's organization to pieces. McClernand had half of the army under his command, and if he had struck with anything like the swiftness and determination of McPherson, Pemberton could have hardly gotten across the Big Black River with more than a small remnant of demoralized men. As it was he had lost Loring's Division of 6,000 men, which was cut off and compelled to make a wide sweep around to join Johnston, had left 3,000 killed and wounded upon the battlefield, and had lost 4,000 prisoners and from 24 to 30 pieces, with a vast amount of stores and equipments. He only saved his wagons by the accident of having ordered them back when he received Johnston's order to join him. Among his killed was Brig.-Gen. Tilghman, who had surrendered Fort Henry and was shot in a vain effort to rally the demoralized and broken troops. Stevenson's Division, which had been holding Vicksburg, was completely routed and broken up.

The value of time in war was never better illustrated, for Johnston had received from Pemberton notice that he was on the way to join him and Johnston had advanced from Calhoun Station with two brigades to meet him, but instead he met at Livingston a messenger with the information of Pemberton's defeat and rout.

Grant, with his determined habit of reaping the whole field of battle, was with McClernand's men, urging forward a hot pursuit, and Osterhaus, Carr and A. J. Smith were pushing ahead with energy to break down all efforts to cover the retreat. Loring had attempted to occupy the Clinton and Raymond roads to cover the retreat of Bowen's Division, but Osterhaus attacked him fiercely, and soon drove him back on the Raymond road. Smith's Division had attacked Tilghman's Brigade and broken it, and Carr moved swiftly along the Clinton road and succeeded in getting possession of the only ford across Baker's Creek, which prevented Loring from rejoining Pemberton, and he made his way "without baggage, wagons or cooking utensils" to Crystal Springs, on the New Orleans Railroad, 25 miles south of Jackson, where he reported to Johnston.

Giving the enemy no rest, Carr's Division pushed the Confederates through Edward's Station, reaching that point at 8 p. m. and going into bivouac there. Pemberton and his officers strove hard to gather up their broken forces and bring order out of the chaos. Pemberton ordered the demoralized regiments of Stevenson's Division to move on to St. Albans Station and reorganize there, but most of them gave out when they reached Bovina, and threw themselves on the ground to rest.

It seems singular, but the reports of the Confederate officers show that their troops were much more physically exhausted by their fighting in position and their disorderly retreat after defeat than the Union troops, which had marched for hours to attack them, and had then assailed them over difficult ground and kept up a relentless pursuit. Most of Pemberton's men went by the road leading west of Edward's Station, and crossed the river by the railroad bridge and one improvised with a steamboat.

The Confederate reports show a strange inequality in the losses. Stevenson's Division had 233 killed to 131 in Bowen's and 16 in Loring's. Stevenson also lost 2,851 prisoners to 868 in Bowen's Division and 120 in Loring's Division. Stevenson's Division, being of no present fighting value, Pemberton got Bowen's Division together as well as he could, and placed it in the fortifications which he had previously prepared to defend the crossing of the Big Black River. He hoped to check the Union army there and also give Loring a chance to rejoin him. When Loring came up it was intended that he should form on the west bank of the river, and the two divisions would be able to hold the Union army at bay. But Loring never appeared.

The Fortifications.

At the railroad bridge crossing the Big Black Pemberton had constructed a very elaborate system of fortifications, and which the Confederate engineers had thought ample to defend the river. At each of the fords there had been tetes-de-pont—bridge heads—made to cover them. The rapid advance of the Union troops seized these, however, before the rebels could get into position to defend them. Where the railroad crosses the river the stream makes a sharp curve to the west, leaving a wide stretch of bottom land nearly one mile straight across its curve. This bottom land is entirely flat, and was then open, excepting some bunches of timber and a line of willows along a bayou which ran nearly straight across the curve. This had in it at the time two feet or more of water. Advantage had been taken of this ditch to make it part of the works, and behind it had been raised a line of breastworks of cotton bales with dirt thrown over them. In front were a heavy abatis and open fields from 400 to 600 yards wide. On either side of the river the bluffs were from 40 to 50 feet high and the ground very broken. Artillery planted on the west side would cover and assist the men in defending the breastworks behind the ditch. Communication was secured by planking the railroad bridge, and above the bridge a steamboat was anchored across the stream. It extended nearly the width of the river and planks laid from her bow and stern completed the bridge.

Sherman Comes Up.

Immediately upon discovering the threatening attitude of Gen. Pemberton at Champion's Hill Gen. Grant had sent word back to Gen. Sherman to send on one of his divisions immediately, and to follow with the other as soon as he had completed the work of destruction. Steele's Division was started at once, and later in the day Sherman followed with Tuttle's, and reaching Bolton Station about dark of May 16 was met by one of Gen. Grant's staff officers with orders to change direction to the right on what was known as the Upper Jackson road, which crossed the Big Black at Bridgeport.

By this time Grant had won the victory and he wanted to thrust Sherman forward to interpose between Pemberton and the intrenchments around Vicksburg. Blair's Division had already been ordered to Bridgeport to meet the rest of Sherman's Corps.

Sunday morning, May 17, dawned very bright and fair with all of the Thirteenth and Seventeenth Corps closing in rapidly around the intrenchments at the railroad crossing of the Big Black. Inside of these intrenchments the Confederates were in much confusion, with no one seeming to have a head for direction and certainly no one's orders receiving much attention. Pemberton had brought forward Vaughn's East Tennessee and Baldwin's Louisiana and Mississippi Brigades from the intrenchments of Vicksburg, to encourage his demoralized men, and to these were added Bowen's Division of Missourians. There were, therefore, five brigades—Vaughn's, Baldwin's, Greene's, Villepigue's and Cockrell's—engaged in the defense, with about 5,000 in the breastworks.

The field guns had been placed behind this line and the horses sent across the river for safety. Carr's Division had the advance, and soon engaged the enemy with a heavy line of skirmishers, supported by two brigades deploying in the woods to the right of the road while Osterhaus was bringing his division up on the left. Along the front of both of these divisions the firing became very heavy, and continued so for nearly three hours. The position was so strong and the ground in front so open that the Union advance was checked, and to some it looked as if the army would be brought to a standstill until a flanking movement could be made which would give Pemberton time to recover himself and get his army in shape behind the works of Vicksburg. The whole front of the rebel line was occupied by cleared fields of from 400 to 600 yards in width. This allowed a converging fire of the infantry and artillery behind the breastworks and the cannon stationed on the bluffs upon an assaulting party, and which would render its destruction almost certain.

Col. Kinsman's Gallant Charge.

At this moment the gallant Col. Kinsman, of Lawler's Brigade, Carr's Division, discovered a weaker point in the abatis which offered a desperate chance to strike the enemy's line. The manner in which it was done is best told in the official report of Col. Michael K. Lawler, commanding the brigade:

"During the greater part of the forenoon heavy but ineffectual musketry firing was kept up by the enemy upon my men, briskly responded to by our sharpshooters. Late in the forenoon, finding it impossible to press farther forward along the river bank toward the enemy, as I had intended, Col. Kinsman, 23d Iowa, proposed to charge at once the enemy's works and drive them out at the point of the bayonet, and asked my consent to the same.

"Foreseeing that a charge by a single regiment, unsustained by the whole line, against fortifications as formidable as those in his front, could hardly be successful, at the same time I gave my consent to his daring proposition I determined that there should be a simultaneous movement on the part of my whole command. Accordingly, the 21st Iowa, Col. Merrill, was ordered to charge with the 23d, the 11th Wis. following close upon them as a support, and the 22d Iowa, Col. William M. Stone—which had in the meanwhile crossed the field and taken position on the river bank on the right of the 11th Wis.—were ordered to move out into the field and act as a reserve. Two guns of the Peoria Battery and one 20-pounder Parrott belonging to the 1st Wis. Battery were in position in the field, actively at work upon the enemy and doing good service. In addition, orders had been sent to the 49th and 96th Ind.—two regiments, which had been sent from Osterhaus's Division to my support early in the forenoon—to send forward at once two companies as skirmishers to attract the attention of the enemy from the movement on the right, and as soon as the charge should be commenced to move promptly forward in its support. Orders were further given that the men should reserve their fire until upon the rebel works.

"Finally the regiments that were to lead the charge were formed, with bayonets fixed, in the edge of the woods on the river bank. All things being in readiness the command 'forward' was given by Col. Kinsman, and at once his noble regiment sprang forward to the works. The 21st, led on by Col. Merrill, moved at the same instant, the 11th Wis., Col. Harris, closely following. Through a terrible fire of musketry from the enemy in front and a galling fire from his sharpshooters on the right these brave men dashed bravely on.

"Kinsman fell, dangerously wounded, before half the distance was accomplished. Struggling to his feet, he staggered a few paces to the front, cheered forward his men, and fell again, this time to rise no more, pierced through by a second ball.

"Col. Merrill, the brave commander of the 21st Iowa, fell, wounded, early in the charge, while gallantly leading his regiment against the enemy.

"Immediately Lieut.-Col. Glasgow placed himself at the head of the 23d, and Maj. Van Anda led on the 21st. Undismayed by the loss of their Colonels, and by the perfect hail-storm of bullets poured into them with destructive effect, the men of the 23d and 21st Iowa and the 11th Wis. pressed onward, nearer and nearer, to the rebel works, over the open field, 500 yards, under a wasting fire, and up to the edge of the bayou. Halting here only long enough to pour into the enemy a deadly volley, they dashed forward through the bayou, filled with water, fallen timber and brush, on to the rebel works with the shout of victors, driving the enemy in confusion from their breastworks and rifle-pits, and entering in triumph the rebel stronghold.

"Hurrying forward the 49th and 69th Ind. and 22d Iowa, I sent the two Indiana regiments to the support of my left, and ordered the Iowa regiment to move against the extreme left of the enemy's works, where they, several hundred strong, still held out, while the 11th Wis. was directed to occupy the ground between the enemy and the bridge, and thus cut off their retreat. The movement was successful. The rebels broke and fled before the 22d Iowa, and fell an easy prey into the hands of the 11th Wis. Those of the rebels who were not captured hastened to make good their retreat over the bridge. As the result of this successful charge we may with justice claim that it gave our army entire possession of the enemy's extended line of works, and with them their field artillery (18 pieces in all), a large quantity of ammunition, thousands of small-arms, and 3,000 prisoners.

"By our brigade were captured 1,460 small-arms, several hundred accouterments, chiefly collected by the 11th Wis., 1,120 prisoners, and four stand of colors.

"It is perhaps worthy of remark that more men were captured by my brigade than I had men in the charge; but this brilliant success was not accomplished without considerable loss; 14 killed and 185 wounded in the space of three minutes, the time occupied in reaching the enemy's works, attest the severity of the fire to which my men were subjected."

A Wild Rout.

The success of this daring charge was clearly seen on both sides, and immediately followed by a wild rout of the Confederates. A. J. Smith's Division was just coming up on Osterhaus's left, and at once rushed forward to take advantage of the break. Vaughn's Brigade, in the center, saw that they were cut off from the bridge, and abandoning all thought of defense, turned and rushed wildly for it. Its example was followed by all the Confederate troops in a most precipitate flight, where every man was for himself. They abandoned 18 pieces of artillery and over 1,400 small-arms. Before two-thirds of the enemy had been able to get across the bridges these were fired. Maj. Lockett, the Confederate Engineer, had prepared for their destruction only too well by saturating them and masses of cotton with turpentine, and placing inflammable materials where they would do their work effectually. The result was that 1,751 of the Confederates were cut off by the flames and compelled to surrender. It is said that Pemberton and his staff were present and tried to stop the premature firing of the bridges, but without effect. They, however, rallied part of the men on the west side of the river, and with fresh troops kept up such a fire upon McClernand's men as to prevent their constructing floating bridges on which to cross and make an immediate pursuit.

Outside of the prisoners and materials the Confederate losses were not heavy. They have been reported at 20 killed and 242 wounded.

The Union troops, being the assailants over such difficult approach, suffered quite heavily. Gen. Grant states his losses at 39 killed, 237 wounded and three missing, the most of which occurred in Lawler's Brigade of Carr's Division.

Grant Ordered to Port Hudson.

While Gen. Grant was sitting on his horse watching the formation of the troops an officer from Gen. Banks's staff came up and presented him with a letter from Gen. Halleck, dated May 11. It had been sent by the way of New Orleans to Banks to be forwarded to Gen. Grant, and contained orders for Grant to at once return to Grand Gulf and co-operate from there with Banks against Port Hudson, after which the two armies would unite to capture Vicksburg.

Gen. Grant said to the officer that the order came too late, and that Gen. Halleck would not give it now if he were there and saw the situation. The officer who brought the order was quite insistent that it should be obeyed, and began presenting reasons for this, when Gen. Grant heard a great cheering, and saw Col. Lawler in his shirt-sleeves leading the successful charge against the enemy. Gen. Grant rode off at once in that direction, and never saw the officer again.

All this was over at 9 o'clock, and at once Gen. Grant gave orders for the construction of bridges by which the river could be crossed and the pursuit kept up. Gen. McPherson superintended the construction of one personally, Gen. Ransom of another and Lieut. Hains, of the Engineer Corps, a third. Lieut. Hains built a raft bridge. Gen. McPherson took the cotton bales found in the works for pontoons, and Gen. Ransom resorted to the lumberman's device of cutting trees off half-way, so that they would fall with their tops across the river. Cotton-gins, barns, houses and other buildings near were torn down to supply the lumber for this purpose. They worked all night at this, and had them ready the next morning.

Gen. Sherman Crosses the Big Black.

Gen. Sherman reached the Big Black River at Bridgeport about noon, and found Blair's Division had arrived an hour before. Gen. Sherman gives this account of his crossing the river and his capture of the redoubtable fortifications at Haynes's Bluff, which had been such a frowning obstacle to the Army of the Tennessee during the long months of the Winter and Spring:

"I found Gen. Blair in person, and he reported that there was no bridge across the Big Black; that it was swimming deep; and that there was a rebel force on the opposite side, intrenched. He had ordered a detachment of the 13th U. S., under Capt. Charles Ewing, to strip some artillery horses, mount the men, and swim the river above the ferry, to attack and drive away the party on the opposite bank. I did not approve of this risky attempt, but crept down close to the brink of the river bank, behind a corn-crib belonging to a plantation house near by, and saw the parapet on the opposite bank. Ordering a section of guns to be brought forward by hand behind this corn-crib, a few well-directed shells brought out of their holes the little party that was covering the crossing, viz, a Lieutenant and 10 men, who came down to the river bank and surrendered. Blair's pontoon-train was brought up, consisting of india-rubber boats, one of which was inflated, used as a boat, and brought over the prisoners. A pontoon-bridge was at once begun, finished by night, and the troops began the passage. After dark the whole scene was lighted up with fires of pitchpine. Gen. Grant joined me there, and we sat on a log, looking at the passage of the troops by the light of those fires; the bridge swayed to and fro under the passing feet, and made a fine war-picture.

"At daybreak we moved on, ascending the ridge, and by 10 a. m. the head of our column, long drawn out, reached the Benton road, and gave us command of the peninsula between the Yazoo and the Big Black. I dispatched Col. Swan, of the 4th Iowa Cav., to Haynes's Bluff, to capture that battery from the rear, and he afterward reported that he found it abandoned, its garrison having hastily retreated into Vicksburg, leaving their guns partially disabled, a magazine full of ammunition, and a hospital full of wounded and sick men. Col. Swan saw one of our gunboats lying about two miles below in the Yazoo, to which he signaled. She steamed up, and to its commander the cavalry turned over the battery of Haynes's Bluff, and rejoined me in front of Vicksburg."

Pemberton's Army Doomed.

The advance of Sherman to Haynes's Bluff settled the fate of Pemberton's army and dashed to earth all the hopes of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston of getting it out where he could use it, in connection with his own forces, against Gen. Grant.

In response to a resolution by the Confederate Congress, Gen. Johnston wrote a long history of these operations, with detailed information as to his efforts to save Pemberton's army by getting him to abandon Vicksburg and unite with him.

Undoubtedly Jefferson Davis's meddling was primarily responsible for the loss of both Pemberton's army and Gen. Gardner's at Port Hudson. Mississippi was Jefferson Davis's own State, and he was adverse to giving up its chief places to the invading army. He had a plan in his own mind that by holding Vicksburg and Port Hudson Gen. Grant could be cut off from access to the Mississippi River and starved into retreat or surrender, while Gen. Johnston with the forces under his command could prevent Grant from advancing farther into the country, if not inflict a severe defeat upon him. This plan would have succeeded with a commander less energetic and capable than Gen. Grant. At the same time a commander of less caliber than Grant would never have placed his army in the position that Grant did his.

In his statement Gen. Johnston says that on May 14, after the capture of Jackson, he sent a dispatch to Gen. Pemberton in which he said that probably one-half of Grant's army was at Jackson, and Pemberton could decide the campaign by coming out promptly and defeating the other half, which was immediately in front of him. This dispatch was not answered, and Gen. Pemberton afterwards said that he only received it while on the retreat from Champion's Hill.

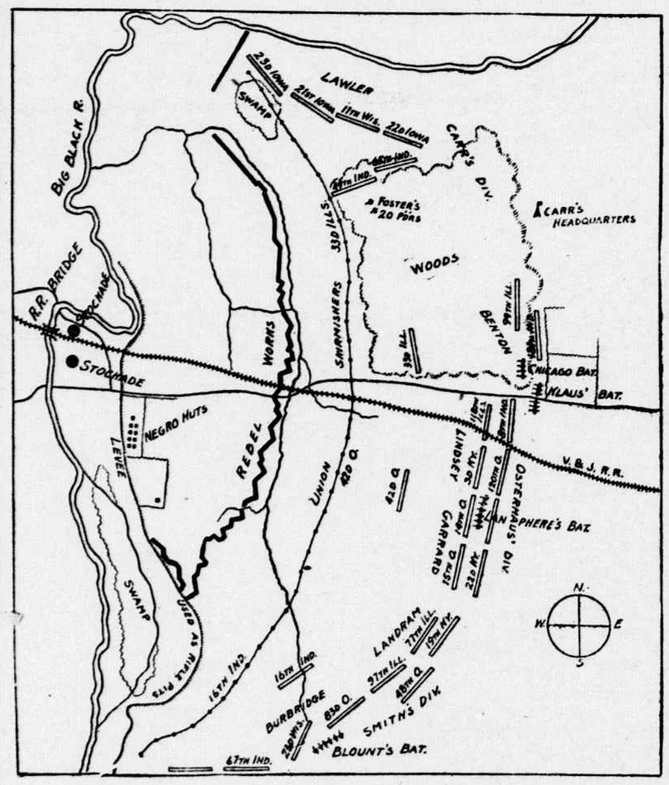
May 15 Johnston marched to Calhoun Station to come into junction with Pemberton. At that point Gen. Johnston received from Pemberton a dispatch dated 5:40 p. m. of May 14 stating that he was moving out a column of 17,000 men with the hope of cutting off Grant's communications and forcing him to attack him. Pemberton did not feel strong enough to make an attack himself. This communication showed that Pemberton had not moved for 10 hours after the receipt of Johnston's order to do so, had disobeyed his orders, and acted in opposition to the majority of the council of war.

May 16 Pemberton informed Johnston that he was about to move toward Clinton to join him, but he reminded Johnston that he probably did not comprehend the condition in which this movement would leave Vicksburg.

May 17 Johnston marched 15 miles to meet him, and then learned of his defeat at Champion's Hill and his withdrawal with heavy loss to the Big Black Bridge. He expected that he would be forced back from this point and would have to abandon Haynes's Bluff. Gen Johnston immediately wrote back to him:

"If Haynes's Bluff be untenable, Vicksburg is of no value and cannot be

(Continued on page six.)



THE OPPOSING FORCES AT THE BLACK RIVER BRIDGE.

WAR'S MIGHTY COST.

The Heavy Price Paid by the Union and Confederate Armies for the Possession of Chattanooga.

By Maj. S. H. M. BYERS, Adjutant, 5th Iowa.

In the Ranks at Chattanooga.

In the October days of 1863 some 50,000 Union soldiers were starving under the shadow of Lookout Mountain. The enemy sat around on the hill-tops like crows waiting to devour a carcass. Ten thousand of them sat on top of Lookout, 25,000 sat on top of Missionary Ridge; still other thousands occupied Raccoon Mountain, almost behind the Union army, thus cutting off its line of supplies. Rosecrans's army was living on a cracker a day. To be exact, the men had four crackers and a quarter of a pound of bacon for three days. The horses, except a few at headquarters, had nothing but the bark of trees and dead leaves. Thousands of them lay dead. Along the one muddy wagon road to Bridgeport 10,000 dead mules filled the air with an unbearable stench. There were not enough live and strong horses to pull a single battery out to the line of defence. When not watched, the men would steal the little corn the horses had at headquarters, so hungry were they. They were weak and dispirited. No wonder. Only a month before 17,000 of their comrades had been lost at Chickamauga. Now they were virtually surrounded and starving. What were they to do? President Lincoln was alarmed; the country was alarmed; the authorities at Washington were paralyzed. Only 150 miles away, under Burnside, at Knoxville, another Union army, 25,000 strong, was surrounded, and the Confederate crows sat on top of the hills there also. If this Chattanooga army were to be lost, Knoxville, too, would be lost, and with it would be sacrificed all East Tennessee and all its loyal people, who through a thousand dangers and death had remained faithful to the American Union.

All the North, spite of recent victories, was in a state of absolute gloom. Bragg, apparently, had the Union Army of the West by the throat. Suddenly the President bethought himself of Grant. He had never lost a battle. They started him by quick train for Chattanooga. He had barely reached Nashville when an ominous telegram overtook him saying to hurry up. Rosecrans, it was reported, was about to attempt the hazard of a retreat. The soldiers were weak, the mud was axle-deep, the rain awful, the enemy everywhere. Retreat meant total disaster. Grant hurried to the end of the railroad at Bridgeport, and then took horse for the army, 60 miles away. He was a cripple then and on crutches. At the bad places in the road his staff carried him on their shoulders. The two commanders, the one going and the other coming, met for a moment at the village where the railroad ended. They must have had strange feelings. Rosecrans had formerly been the idol of his army. He was still popular with many of his soldiers. How often has this very writer, a lad in his army, swung his hat and cheered and cheered for the hero of Iuka, Corinth and Stone River! Now the once-glorious idol was floundering through the mud northward, his army left in despair behind him, and no soul so poor as to do him reverence.

Grant's Hand at Once Felt.

Grant immediately ordered Sherman, who had 25,000 men near Memphis, to come to his aid. My own regiment, the 5th Iowa, formed a part of Sherman's army. We had been repairing railroads back of Corinth, and were slowly creeping in the direction of Chattanooga. There were guerrillas and bands of roaming cavalry rebels everywhere. It was not safe to go a mile from camp. One day Sherman himself, who was coming out behind us from Memphis on the railroad that we had repaired, came near having his career ended forever. He was sitting in the rear car of the train, asleep, when a big body of Confederate cavalry suddenly appeared from the woods with a mighty yell. There happened to be part of a regiment of Regulars on board the train. Sherman jumped off, took personal command of the handful of soldiers, and successfully fought one of the bravest little battles of his life. His escape was marvelous. He joined us at once, and we were soon on the banks of the Tennessee taking things a little easy. We made short marches, and when not working on the railroad had good times in bivouac. A mail was to go back North, and thousands were writing letters home. Books, too, from plantation houses that had fallen under the ban, furnished those who cared for it something to read. I still have in my possession a handsome morocco-bound volume, called "Great Truths by Great Authors," that I picked up on the lawn of a burning home near Oxford, Miss. It afforded me delightful reading there in bivouac on the banks of the Tennessee. On its flyleaf is dimly written the name of "Rupert Hughes, Dec. 25, 1855. It was probably a Christmas gift. I carried it with me to the end of the war, and after these 40 years if Hughes or any of his kindred will identify the volume it shall be returned.

Corporal Pike.

One night, it was Oct. 27, while we were in bivouac there by the river, a young fellow called to us from a passing canoe. He was a disguised messenger from Grant's army. It was Corp'l Pike. For a hundred miles alone in his little boat he had worked his way down the Tennessee River, encountering a hundred dangers. His message was for Sherman to drop everything and make a forced march to Chattanooga, 320 miles away. We crossed the river on a couple of gunboats at Florence, Ala., and started on the hard tramp with a great hurrah. Those who had horses gave them to the footsore and the marchers who broke down at the roadside. I was Adjutant of the regiment, and had two good horses, but I walked every foot of the way to Chattanooga. Never in my life have I seen such gratitude as shone in the faces of the brokendown soldiers when helped into the officers' saddles. To be left behind meant death at the hands of the guerrillas who hung like wolves at the sides of our columns in every direction. If we heard shooting at the roadside, we generally knew that some comrade had been ambushed and killed.

One morning, it was Oct. 25, there was a heavy fog, and our advance ran into a force of the enemy. We were ambushed, and lost 100 men and the brave Col. Terrence, of the 30th Iowa, in half an hour. The little battle scarcely stopped us in our hurried march. We lifted the wounded into the wagons, buried the dead at the roadside, and pushed on. At last we saw in the distance the dim top of Lookout Mountain. Every soul took cheer and hurried, for now yet other messengers met us, telling us the great battle was about to begin. This eagerness of soldiers to reach a battlefield, where wounds, or death, are almost sure to meet them, will never be explained. Usually, however, the hurrying soldiers count on victory and glory, and what glory in this world is there to compare with the laurels won by men on the battlefield! It is because all has been staked on the awful venture. Men who offer their lives for a principle have the world's admiration. The tenderest woman will love a hero; courage, valor, are the virtues the world applauds; and so we soldiers hurried our steps. Even the wearied ones in the saddles insisted that they were better, dismounted, shouldered their muskets, and joined their companies.

THE HUNGRY SOLDIERS WOULD STEAL THE FEW GRAINS OF CORN FROM THE STARVING HORSES.

Arrival at Chattanooga.

It was 4 o'clock of an afternoon when Sherman's soldiers were met with a cheer at Chattanooga, and we marched in broad daylight right past the foot of Lookout Mountain and in full view of all the rebel army. All this, however, was a ruse; for instead of attacking Lookout, as the enemy expected us to do, we changed our bivouac in the night, left a thousand campfires burning to deceive our foe, and suddenly marched to a point on the bank of the Tennessee River three miles above the town. There we silently hid ourselves in the woods, and waited events. We were now called the left wing of Grant's army.

While we were hurrying on that great march Grant had made many fortunate changes in affairs. A "cracker-line" had been opened by running little barges past the enemy on Lookout and Raccoon Mountains. The soldiers and horses had something to eat; better positions had been gained by fighting for them. Great events were now about to happen. Grant, half in agony, was waiting the coming of Sherman. Once, on Nov. 7, he had even thought to strike Bragg without waiting. On that day he peremptorily ordered Thomas to attack the enemy's right. But for reasons of his own Thomas paid no attention to the order. It is almost pathetic to hear Grant tell how he "could do nothing then but wait for Sherman."

A Great Spectacular Battle.

Now, Sherman and his soldiers were on the ground. It is not for a subordinate officer to go into the plans of the great commanders who led at Chattanooga. I will only recall the bare names of some of the military stars. Logan was there, and Howard, and Sheridan, and Hooker, and Thomas, Grant, and Sherman. President Lincoln himself was there, in a sense, for he had a telepraph wire stretched from the battlefield into the White House, a thousand miles away. These leaders themselves have left descriptions as simple and as great as the commentaries of Julius Cesar. But it is not the big captains, standing on hill-tops and looking through field glasses, who see the worst of war. It is the subordinate officers leading the men with the muskets, and the privates themselves, who experience the real thing—the men who come out of it with their bones broken and their faces smeared with blood and gunpowder.

The most spectacular battle that ever took place on this continent was about to begin. One hundred and twenty-five thousand soldiers were about to close in a deadly grip in the mountains of Tennessee. Nature had done everything to make the scene sublime. The beautiful Tennessee River, rapid and in flood, wound its way past the two armies. Lookout Mountain lifted its head 3,000 feet above the sea; Missionary Ridge, abrupt and rocky, and 800 feet above the valley, stretched off for many miles, a mighty fortress, seemingly impregnable to any human assault. Yet an assault was the very thing we were about to undertake. Had Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain not had a victorious and confident army intrenched in their tops and sides, they would still have seemed inaccessible. I doubt if there was a private soldier in Grant's army who did not feel every chance was against us.

Grant and Sherman both came over to where our regiment lay the evening of the 23d of November. They came to look at some mysterious pontoons, or flatboats, that were secreted in a creek near to us. There were 116 of these boats, and at a quiet signal in the night Sherman's soldiers were to get into them and cross the river for the assault.

Just before dark I went down to the river and walked along the bank. On the opposite side I saw the pickets of the enemy also walking up and down close by the water. They were dressed in brown or butternut, not gray, uniforms. One of them called something to me, and I heard them chaffing with our own pickets near me. Not a shot was fired by anyone, yet we could have killed each other with common pistols. This refraining from picket-firing was not uncommon. We had acted so at Vicksburg, when our trenches were so close that we sometimes passed coffee and crackers to oneanother.

As to my own regiment, we still had short rations, and my horses were trying to get a little supper from the leafless bushes where they were tied. I had great pity for these helpless animals. Near us were hundreds of other animals dead.

Taking Orchard Knob.

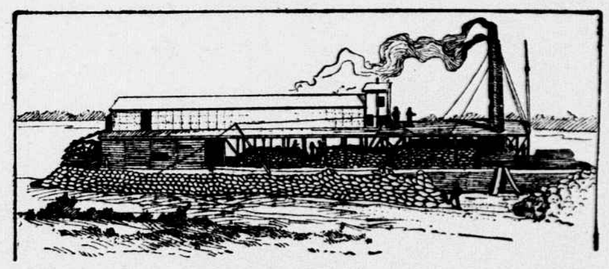
On this day, while our division is hiding here in the woods, nervously waiting for what is about to happen, we hear terrific firing to our right. The center of the army is making a charge in front of Fort Wood. Several divisions have paraded there in the open with bands playing, drums beating and flags flying. The enemy, from their breastworks in the valley in front, looks on in wonder at the beautiful spectacle. Suddenly Grant fires a cannon, and 10,000 of the beautiful paraders dash toward the enmy's works with a yell. For a whole mile everything falls before them and a new position nearer the Ridge is gained for Grant's center. The charge lasted but a few minutes, but it cost Grant 1,100 men. Now he was nearer the enemy. He could stand on top of Orchard Knob and look at the whole battlefield. With his glass he could see Bragg's headquarters on top of Mission Ridge. He could see Bragg himself, walking about among his staff. Bragg and he had been school boys together at West Point. They had once been members of the same regiment in the Regular Army. Fate had done strange things for them. There they stood on the heights gazing in each other's faces. At their feet, in the valley, lay 100,000 men hurrying to slaughter one another. Grant and Bragg. They were making history.

Crossing the River.

Darkness came on early that night before the battle, and my wet and shivering regiment lay down in their soaked blankets on the ground to sleep.

It must have been 2 o'clock in the morning when the sound of rowlocks on the water wakened us. The pontoons were coming. They had been brought out of the creek and in the darkness and silence 30 soldiers climbed into each boat. Sherman himself, in a long waterproof, was near the pontoons, giving directions. Sixty-nine of our cannon were placed on the bank behind us to fire in case we were overwhelmed. Soon we were in the middle of the rapid river. I am sure I never felt as much alarm in any battle as I now felt floating, perfectly helpless, out there in the darkness. Any moment a fire from a battery might strike us and we were gone. None of us spoke. I had again some time to think, and too much thinking can at times alarm the strongest. However (though we in the boats did not know it), the enemy's pickets on the shore had, by a ruse, all been captured an hour earlier.

To our perfect surprise we landed without a shot. Every man had carried a spade, as well as a musket, and by daylight we had dug almost miles of deep rifle pits.



THE "CHATTANOOGA"—THE LITTLE STEAMER THAT OPENED UP THE "CRACKER-LINE" AT CHATTANOOGA.

(Continued on page two.)